



Code of Behaviour

In revising this code consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of the school. The Child and Family Agency was established on the 1st January 2014 and is now the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. The Educational Welfare Services operate under this agency and will replace the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

1. Introduction

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) for schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student;
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school

This document can be accessed at:

http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf.

See also the website of the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency at Tusla: www.tusla.ie

The aim of this Code of Behaviour is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated, while acknowledging the right of all children to education in a disruption-free environment.

The staff will make every effort to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilized by teachers. In our school greater emphasis is placed on the affirmation of good behaviour than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.

We aim to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil.

Children will be made aware that while they are wearing their school uniform, even outside of school hours, they are still deemed to be representing the school. Therefore, any disrepute they bring to the school while wearing the uniform could be subject to sanction. This code is to be implemented in conjunction with our Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racism Policies.

2. Principles

- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to respect these differences.
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation amongst staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- The rules are being kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what pupils should do, these rules are outlined in the general school rules on back of homework journal and rules for the schoolyard.
- It should be noted that children are expected to keep the code of behaviour while representing the school at events outside of school hours and on school tours and such other outings.
- Every effort will be made to have a child with emotional and behavioural difficulties referred for psychological assessment. Help will also be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services provided by Health Boards.

- In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal teacher and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are told not only when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well. This is done through various formats, such as notes home, star of the week, certificate of merit etc.
- Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the principal 'may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child'.

3. Rules of the School

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school".

The code of our school has been summarised in the following rhyme.....

1. Talking: When in school, know the rule: silence, whisper, talk.
2. Movement: For safety in school... walk with care is the rule.
3. Time: Make haste, don't waste, be on time.
4. Respect: Respect others as you should, be kind, polite and good.
5. Conduct: Be fair, always care, remember to share.

This summary is printed in our school journal and will be revised regularly during the school year, in particular at the beginning of the school year and during assemblies.

Covid 19 Rules of the School

- One way system in operation during class times, exceptions to this as per Covid 19 Plan
- Children will remain in their pods whilst in the classroom. Pods may be changed following breaks of a week or more e.g. Halloween, Christmas and Easter. Pod list names are sent to the LWR (Covid Lead Officer)
- Movement around the school is minimal.
- Hand Sanitising procedures are strictly followed when entering or exiting a room.
- Hand washing procedures to be followed at all times.
- School times (Arrivals and Dismissals) are staggered and children should only arrive at their appointed time.
- Same applies regardless of weather conditions.

Rules for the Yard

- Move in single file in and out of the school taking care to walk **within** the line on floor.
- Move one class at a time, one behind the other.
- Play safely keeping your hands and feet to yourself: No wrestling, fighting, punching, tripping, kicking, hitting, spitting, stone-throwing or biting.
- Co-operate with and respect the teacher/SNA on the yard.
- No bad / inappropriate language.
- Line up properly-when bell rings at end of lunch walk to the line and stand in single file **quietly**.
- Do not bring food out onto the yard.
- No pulling at other's clothes, especially hoods.
- No lifting or climbing on other's backs.
- No swinging and no trains.
- No climbing on fence, gates or windows.
- Teachers should remind children to go to the toilet **before** going out on the yard.
- Children are only allowed back into school with teacher's permission.
- Children must obtain toilet pass from teacher on yard if they need to go to the toilet. Return toilet pass to teacher, not to another child.
- Take care as you move through the yard.

- Report any incidents to teacher on yard, teacher must make sure to report issues to the class teacher.
 - Avoid puddles after heavy rain.
 - Make sure you have your jumper/cardigan/coat with you when going back inside.
 - Include everyone who wants to play in the game.
 - Keep to the assigned skipping area when skipping.
- **Covid 19 Yard procedures**
 - **1)** Each class plays with their own “Bubble” (class mates) in a designated area in the yard and they must stay in that area for the duration of their two breaks and wait till their class teacher collects them from the yard.
 - **2)** To avoid cross contamination each class is expected to walk directly to their play area and not walk through other Bubble play areas
 - **3)** If you knock a cone down by accident please put it up and nobody is allowed to move the cones
 - **4)** Children must follow HSE Guidelines in coughing or sneezing. This means covering their mouth and nose with a tissue or their bent elbow when they cough or sneeze and no spitting allowed
 - **5)** Children are encouraged to go to the toilet before they go out to the yard in order to minimise movement around the school.

4. Positive Strategies

A Discipline for Learning (DFL) system is in place in our school. If this system is followed consistently and fairly, then pupils will know what behaviour is acceptable and can choose whether or not to follow the rules of the school and get rewarded. The sanctions below come into force if pupils choose not to follow the rules. The overall emphasis is of a positive nature – many children follow rules quietly every day and don’t receive the recognition they deserve. This system hopes to address this situation and recognise those children and reward them.

Praise may be also given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil’s exercise book.
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation.(Not during pandemic)
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- A system of merit marks in the classroom.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- A mention to parent i.e. written or verbal communication.
- Positive emails to reflect pandemic situation

Similar strategies are in operation in all classes. These include the following approaches:

- Pupil of the week / Table of the week.
- Homework Passes / Friendship Passes.
- Positive Note written into journal.
- Golden Time, Movie, Treats such as extra playtime, sweets, stickers, gold stars, hot chocolate, Popcorn Parties.

5. Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be considered. The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

6. Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

Some children may display aggressive or violent behaviour. Serious emotional and behavioural problems will be dealt with in conjunction with parents. An agreed behaviour plan will be made with parents so that consequences for good and bad behaviour are replicated at home and at school.

Children who have emotional disturbances may be referred for psychological assessment.

Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, etc.

Professional development is made available to staff, e.g. SESS, Colleges of Education, ICEP (ProfExcel) courses, Education Centres.

The school includes physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, Managing Challenging Behaviour - Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004: 11 will be read and competent legal advice will be sought.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school must take extra steps e.g.

- The child is sent home for the rest of the day (or for a number of days until agreement of appropriate behaviour is accepted by child and parents)
- Temporary exclusion while consultation with SENO and / or EWO takes place about appropriate resourcing or alternative placement.

7. Behaviour of other Stakeholders in the School

The stakeholders referred to in this section are adult members of our school community: staff, parents, other professionals who work with the children and any other visitors to the school.

The vision of Dunboyne Junior Primary School is that everyone has a right to be safe, content and able to learn. This includes children, staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, all adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

The Department of Education outlines the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other staff through the Education Act and relevant circulars, and they are answerable to the school's Board of Management for any form of unacceptable behaviour through the relevant legislation and circulars. Staff of the school who feel that the behaviour of their colleagues towards them is undesirable should follow the Working Together Guidelines as found on the INTO website:

<http://www.into.ie/ROI/InformationforTeachers/StaffRelations/WorkingTogether/Downloads/WorkingTogether.pdf>.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviour in the school. Examples are below but this is not an exhaustive list:

- All stakeholders should speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays aggression in the school they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases the Gardaí may be called;
- In line with the Child Protection Policy, stakeholders should never approach a child in an aggressive manner. Incidents like these are taken very seriously. No matter how justified someone feels about approaching a child in this manner, the child will be instantly removed from the situation for his/her own safety;
- All meetings with teachers and other staff members should be conducted with a view to resolving a particular situation in line with the school complaints' procedures. Walking out of the room or other forms of antagonistic behaviour are unacceptable;
- Violence, physical or emotional, will not be tolerated. The Gardaí may become involved in any incident of violence between two parties;
- Staff will only speak about a child to his/her parent/guardian. A common experience for schools occurs when a parent asks a teacher about a punishment to a child who may have affected their own child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy;

- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected;
- In line with our ethos, stakeholders should not interrupt class time. Should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made in the office or with the teacher. This ensures that issues can be resolved in a planned way. Classes begin at 9.20am and finish at 3.00pm (2.00pm for infants) and this time should not be interrupted;
- Stakeholders should not isolate or attempt to influence others against particular individuals or groups in the school;
- At all times, adults in the school should model the school's own behaviour system for children.

Stakeholders who fail to respect the rules above will be subject to action from the Board of Management. In some cases, stakeholders may be asked to leave the building and in serious cases, the Board may take legal action and/or ban a stakeholder from the school building.

8. Sanctions

8.1 Inappropriate Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Interrupting class work;
- Running in school building;
- Leaving seat without permission at lunch time;
- Leaving litter around school;
- Not wearing correct uniform;
- Being discourteous/unmannerly;
- Not completing homework without good reason;
- Bringing crisps and fizzy drinks into school etc.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation);
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning;
- Threats or physical hurt to another person;
- Damage to property;
- Theft;
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school, e.g. scissors or other sharp objects;
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Coughing or spitting deliberately into someone's face during Covid 19 Pandemic;
- Verbal or physical assault on a teacher, member of staff or pupil;
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher, member of staff or pupil;
- Serious theft;
- Serious damage to property;
- Serious bullying;

8.2 Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable;

- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others;
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences;
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- A sanction may also: reinforce the boundaries set out in the Code of Behaviour;
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning;
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil;
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve;
3. Prescribing extra work;
4. Supervised detention during break;
5. Referral to Principal;
6. Communication with parents by class teacher;
7. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class;
8. Principal communicating with parents;
9. Loss of privileges;
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and the Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

8.3 Inappropriate Sanctions

- Inappropriate sanctions include:
 - Physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment: physical chastisement of a student is illegal under Section 24 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997;
 - Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a student's self-confidence;
 - Ridicule or private humiliation;
 - Applying sanctions to whole groups or classes in cases of individual or small groups wrongdoing;
 - Leaving a student in an unsupervised situation (e.g. a corridor) while in the care of the school;
 - Persistent isolation of, or ignoring, a student in class;
 - Sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way - the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 require that schools do not discriminate in the use of sanctions.
- Temporarily removing a student from the classroom to a supervised location may be appropriate in the interests of classroom management in order to ensure the learning of other students and to help the individual student to recognise and learn about the impact and consequences of their behaviour. However, consistently denying a student access to a particular part of the curriculum as a general sanction would not be appropriate.

8.4 The School's Duty of Care to Pupils

The school and every teacher should ensure that, in applying a sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. The teacher's duty of care is a professional duty of care, reflecting the teacher's training, skill and knowledge. This duty requires that a student is appropriately supervised at all times while at school.

9. Suspension and Expulsion

9.1 Suspension

Suspension is defined as 'days' (NEWB guidelines, p.70). Exclusion for part of a school day, as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a student from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension. Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a student has engaged in a serious or gross misbehaviour. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, a single instance of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

- The seriously detrimental effect on the education of the other students of the student's behaviour to date;
- Whether the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety;
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The purpose of suspension includes: providing a respite for staff and students, giving the student time to reflect on their actions and the staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change their behaviour. Suspension shall be used as part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The notice to suspend will be informed in writing and will include the reason for suspension, the duration of suspension and the date of return.

The procedures in respect of suspension are those outlined in section 11.5 of the NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'. The Principal can suspend pupils for periods of up to three days. If a suspension for a longer period is being proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB guidelines. Refer to pages 70-78, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf

9.2 Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4)). It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5)).

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. Parents will be invited to meet with the Board of Management to present the case on behalf of the child. This authority will be exercised in line with the procedures outlined on pages 80-87. Developing a Code of behaviour: Guidelines for School, NEWB, 2008.
http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf.

9.3 Appeals

The decision to suspend a pupil for a period of a) 3 days or b) up to 20 days may be appealed by parents to the Board of Management. This must be done in writing within 24 hours of receiving written notification from the Principal in order to process the matter promptly. This will be immediately referred to the Board and their decision will issue as soon as possible. An exception to this will be made in the case of an immediate suspension as outlined in section 11.5 of the NEWB Guidelines.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) expulsion (permanent exclusion from a school) and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02). Parents will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion by letter from the Chairperson of the Board /Principal. Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal).

http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf.

9.4 Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following a period of suspension, the pupil will return to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school Code of Behaviour and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

10. Communicating with Parents

Parents of incoming students are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour.

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to the class teacher about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour or any other concerns that may arise.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher communication;
- Through children's homework journal;
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school;
- Newsletters/school web-site.

11. Review Ratification

This Policy will be reviewed annually. This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13/10/2020.

Chairperson: _____

Any decisions made under the terms of this policy may be appealed under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.